

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 /095 W

-----141000Z 021324 /20

R 121150Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9841

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 2829

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, GH, NI, XA, OAU

SUBJECT: SITHOLE IN NIGERIA

SUMMARY: THE REVEREND NDABANINGI SITHOLE CALLED ON CHARGE MARCH 11.

HE EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR U.U. ROLE IN ARRANGING GENEVA

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NEGOTIATIONS AND EXPLAINED RATIONALE BEHIND HIS CURRENT TOUR OF WEST

AFRICAN CAPITALS. HE ULSO DISCUSSED THE LOME OAU COUNCIL OF

MINISTERS MEETING; HIS TALKS WITH FMG OFFICIALS: GENEVA; THE

NATIONALIST MOVEMENT; AND HIS PLANS TO CONVENE A CONSULTATIVE

CONFERENCE. SITHOLE EXPECTS TO DEPART FOR KINSHASA MARCH 13.

END SUMMARY.

1; THE REVEREND NDABANINGI SITHOLE CALLED ON CHARGE MARCH 11 TO PRESENT HIS VIEWS ON ZIMBABWE. A MR. MTIMI, DESCRIBED AS SITHOLE'S SECRETARY, AND POLCOUNS ALSO PRESENT. SITHOLE BEGAN THE MEETING WITH REQUEST THAT EMBASSY EXPRESS TO DEPARTMENT HIS APPRECIATION FOR USG'S STRONG ENDORSEMENT OF NEED FOR A SETTLEMENT BASED ON MAJORITY RULE AND ITS ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. HE ALSO EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR U.S. OPPOSITION TO SMITH'S INTERNAL OPTION SCHEME AND FOR THE ENCOURAGING PROGRESS NOW BEING MADE TO REPEAL BYRD AMENDMENT. HE EXPLAINED THAT PURPOSE OF HIS TRAVEL IN WEST AFRICA HAS BEEN TO DISSUADE GOVERNMENT LEADERS FROM SUPPORTING FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS' EXCLUSIVE ENDORSEMENT OF PATRIOTIC FRONT (PF) HEADED BY NKOMO AND MUGABE. SITHOLE STATED CONFIDENTLY THAT HIS MISSION HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL, ADDING THAT HE OWED A GREAT DEAL TO MANY GOVERNMENTS, PARTICULARLY THE GHANAINS WHO HAD MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO TRAVEL IN THE AREA. ON OTHER MATTERS, SITHOLE SAID:

2. OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTER'S MEETING IN LOME WAS A SUCCESS AS IT FAILED TO ENDORSE FRONTLINE RECOGNITION OF PF AND INSTEAD REFERRED THE QUESTION TO OAU SUMMIT WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION. NIGERIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER GARBA HAD BEEN MOST HELPFUL AND SYMPATHETIC IN HIS INTERCESSIONS ON THIS QUESTION. ONLY FOUR GOVERNMENTS HAD SPOKEN IN FAVOR OF ENDORSING THE FRONTLINE POSITION IN LOME: ZAMBIA, MOZAMBIQUE, ANGOLA, AND KENYA. TANZANIA HAD REMAINED SILENT, AN ATTITUDE THAT MAY MEAN NYERERE IS CHANGING HIS MIND, AS HAS SERETSE KHAMRGM SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL COMMENDATION FOR THEIR HELPFUL STANCE WERE NIGERIA, GHANA, SIERRA LEONE, LIBERIA, UGANDA, LIBYA, SWAZILAND, AND LESOTHO. CONFIDENTIAL

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3. CURRENT TALKS WITH NIGERIANS: SITHOLE SAID HE HAD SEEN CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, BRIGADIER SHEHU YAR'ADUA, WHO HAD BEEN VERY UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHETIC. HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO MEET OTHER FMG OFFICIALS. (NOTE: OBASANJO IS OUT OF TOWN ON TOUR, VISITING ANAMBRA AND BENUE STATE. GARBA IS NOT YET BACK FROM CAIRO AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT). ACCORDING TO GSE ZANU LEADER, NIGERIANS WILL RESIST EXCLUSIVE RECOGNITION OF PF AT OAU SUMMIT BUT WILL NOT TAKE THE LEAD IN THE DEBATE. RATHER, SITHOLE WAS ENCOURAGED TO DRUM UP SUPPORT IN OTHER CAPITALS FOR HIS POSITION.

4. GENEVA CONFERENCE: SITHOLE SAID HE CONSIDERED GENEVA CONFERENCE TO BE IN ADJOURNMENT. AT TIME TALKS BROKE OFF LAST DECEMBER AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS ON QUESTIONS OF INTERIM GOVERNMENT, DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE, AND NEED FOR GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY EMBRACING ALL FACTIONS. ONLY QUESTION REMAINING WAS THAT OF DIVERSION OF MINISTRIES AMONG THE VARIOUS NATIONALIST GROUPS. HOWEVER, FRONTLINE ENDORSEMENT OF PF IN JANUARY HAD THROWN EVERYTHING INTO CONFUSION. ONLY SOLUTION

NOW IS TO RESUME TALKS. SITHOLE WOULD AGREE TO RESUME THEMSENEVA
TALKS WITH PARTICIPATION OF PF, REPRESENTED BY NKOMO AND MUGABE,;
SMITH HAS TWO OPTIONS: TO GRANT MAJORITY RULE AT THE NEGOTIATING
TABLE IN GENEVA OR BE FORCED TO SURRENDER IT ON THE BATTLEFIELD.
BOTH METHODS HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE OAU, BUT SITHOLE PREFERRED
NEGOTIATIONS TO MORE FIGHTING.

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5.NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS: SITHOLE HOLDS NO BRIEF FOR HIS FORMER
LIEUTENANT MUGABE. ONLY ZANU (SITHOLE), ZAPU (NKOMO), AND THE
ANC (BISHOP MUZOREQA'S FACTION) HAVE ANY RIGHT TO SPEAK FOR THE
PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE. NEITHER THE PF NOR MUGABE HAVE ANY SUPPORT

INSIDE ZIMBABWE AND THEREFORE CANNOT BE CONSIDERED POLITICAL
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REALITIES. SITHOLE CONCEDED THAT NKOMO AND ZAPU ARE POLITICAL REALITIES AND HAVE "SOME SUPPORT" INSIDE THE COUNTRY. AS FAR AS FIGHTING UNITS GO, SITHOLE CLAIMS THAT ZANLA (ZIMBABWE AFRICAN NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY) LED BY WILLIAM DANANGA (PHONETIC) IS WINNING ITS BATTLE WITH ZIPA LED BY MUGABE AND MADE UP OF DISSIDENTS FROM ZANLA. ZIPA'S FORTUNES ARE DEFINITELY ON THE WANE. IT HAS NO FOLLOWING INSIDE ZIMBABWE BUT IT WAS ABLE TO CAUSE TROUBLE IN THE NINE CAMPS ZANLA OPERATES IN MOZAMBIQUE. (ZANU AND ZIPA OPERATE FROM MOZAMBIQUE; ZAPU FROM ZAMBIA.) ONLY THE FACT THAT TANZANIAN TROOPS HAVE TAKEN OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING ORDER IN THE CAMPS HAS AVERTED A SERIOUS SETBACK FOR ZANU AND ZANLA.

6. FUTURE ACTIVITY: TO DEMONSTRATE TO OAU (BEFORE THE SUMMIT) AND TO THE WORLD THAT PF HAS NO POPULAR SUPPORT INSIDE ZIMBABWE, SITHOLE IS PLANNING ABOUT MID-APRIL TO CONVENE A "CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE" WHICH WILL MEET OUTSIDE ZIMBABWE, NOT IN ONE OF FRONTLINE STATES BUT CLOSER TO ZIMBABWE THAN NIGERIA. MAJORITY OF DELEGATES ARE TO COME FROM INSIDE ZIMBABWE, ALTHOUGH REPRESENTATIVES OF THOSE OUTSIDE WILL ALSO BE WELCOME. DEBATE TO BE OPEN AND FREE. ZANU, ZAPU AND ANC ARE TO BE INVITED. SITHOLE IS CONFIDENT THAT RESULTS WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE DO NOT SUPPORT PF OR MUGABE, AND THAT NKOMO DOES NOT ENJOY GREAT STRENGTH INSIDE THE COUNTRY.

7. U.S. ROLE: WHILE EXPRESSING GREAT SATISFACTION WITH U.S. ROLE SO FAR, SITHOLE WANTS USG TO INTENSIFY ITS EFFORTS TO GET GENEVA TALKS RESUMED. INTERNAL SETTLEMENT SCHEME SUCH AS THAT PROPOSED BY SMITH IS UNACCEPTABLE TO SITHOLE AND ONLY RECOURSE OTHER THAN ARMED STRUGGLE IS ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT AT A RESUMED GENEVA CONFERENCE.

8. COMMENT: SITHOLE SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT HIS EFFORTS TO AVERT OAU RECOGNITION OF THE PF WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. HE IS APPARENTLY COUNTING ON HIS "CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE" TO SETTLE THE ISSUE IN HIS FAVOR. LIKE HIS ZAPU COLLEAGUES BEFORE HIM (LAGOS 2249, NOTAL),
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HOWEVER, HE SPENDS A GREAT DEAL OF HIS TIME DISPARAGING HIS FELLOW NATIONALISTS IN A BID FOR LEADERSHIP OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. COPIES OF ZANU POSITION PAPERS, INCLUDING TEXT SITHOLE'S SPEECH TO LOME OAU MEETING, BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT. CROSBY

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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